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2 January 1974

Prof. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you very much for the reprint of your "Moondust" paper. I had remembered your suggestion about organic matter on the Moon (both of us were wrong on this - I had expected at least small amounts of organic matter), but had forgotten your discussion of interstellar molecules.

The radio astronomers at Green Bank are about to increase their sensitivity by an order of magnitude. This should enable them to discover another few dozen interstellar molecules, hopefully including some complex enough to give a clue to their formation process. In anticipation of this breakthrough, we are making a survey of the light molecules made by catalytic synthesis. We'll stick our necks out and publish the list before the radio astronomers get going - let the chips fall where they may.

Happy New Year, and kind regards.

Sincerely,


Edward Anders

EA:sbk

P.S. Thank you also for the reprint on Dendral. It looks like a useful technique, which I shall keep in mind. My estimate of 10^4 C₁₆ alkane isomers was based on an interpolation of Fieser's values for C₁₅ and C₂₀. I am glad to have the exact number. Five significant figures always look better than one!

ANDERS, E.